

## Writing to Learn & WAC Principles

### Role-Playing and Application Activity

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#### **Scenario:**

*Imagine that you're a Writing Fellow working with Professor Amoeba, who is teaching a course in biology. In a meeting with him to discuss his WAC Writing Intensive class, Professor Amoeba complains about the tremendous amount of writing required for his WI course. (The college WI requirements state there should be a "substantial amount of informal writing," such as freewriting, journal responses, and responses to homework assignments.) The professor agrees that students are benefitting from the writing, but he just can't handle the paper load. When he developed the syllabus with his Writing Fellow last semester, he neglected to consider his three other classes with 35 students in each. He is now beginning a unit on human anatomy, and with the amount of material (much of which he claims requires strict memorization), he is beside himself with frustration. What can you do to help?*

With your partner, review Elbow's article, "High-Stakes and Low-Stakes Assigning and Responding to Writing," and identify ideas and suggestions you may use to assist this beleaguered professor. In your consultation with Professor Amoeba focus on the following approaches and topics:

1. Devise two or three low-stakes writing assignments that Professor Amoeba might use in his unit on anatomy. For each one, explain how the activity would engage the students more meaningfully with the material.
2. What advice or tips would you give Professor Amoeba—who is accustomed to writing comments on and giving grades to every piece of writing he receives—for handling the paper load and responding to the two or three low-stakes writing assignments you've devised? Which suggestions for marking student responses posited by Elbow would you recommend he use, and why?
3. In the last few years Professor Amoeba has been deeply distressed by the final paper—which counts for 20% of the course grade. What two or three pieces of advice would you offer in helping him see across-the-board better results?

You will have fifteen minutes to consult and jot down some notes, and then you will have the opportunity to share your ideas with the large group.